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SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS WIRTH'S MEETING WITH
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS FOR ICRC, JEAN DE COURTEN, MAY 17, 1994

1. SUMMARY. ON MAY 17, TIM WIRTH, UNDER SECRETARY FOR
GLOBAL AFFAIRS, MET WITH THE VISITING DIRECTOR OF
OPERATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED
CROSS (ICRC), JEAN DE COURTEN, TO DISCUSS ICRC'S
HUMANITARIAN INVOLVEMENT IN CRISIS SITUATIONS AROUND THE
WORLD. ON RWANDA, DE COURTEN STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: WILLIAM E LANDFAIR
DATE/CASE ID: 07 JUN 2006 200103014

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UN PEACEKEEPERS PROTECT CIVILIAN POPULATIONS AND NOT BE USED TO PROTECT RELIEF CONVOYS. ON BOSNIA, DE COURTEN INFORMED WIRTH THAT ICRC IS PLANNING TO DECREASE ITS RELIEF OPERATIONS IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA BY 40 THIS YEAR, REFLECTING A DECREASE IN THE REQUIREMENT FOR FOOD DELIVERIES. ALSO DISCUSSED WERE EFFORTS TO BAN LANDMINES. END SUMMARY.

2. TIM WIRTH, UNDER SECRETARY FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS, MET WITH ICRC DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, JEAN DE COURTEN. HARALD SCHMID DE GRUNECK, HEAD OF FUNDRAISING FOR ICRC AND PIERRE PONT, THE ICRC DELEGATE IN NEW YORK ACCOMPANIED DE COURTEN. ALSO PRESENT AT THE MEETING WERE PHYLLIS OAKLEY, ACTING PRM DIRECTOR, THERESA LOAR (G), JOSIAH ROSENBLATT (DRL/MLA) AND KATHERINE PERKINS (PRM NOTETAKER).

3. RWANDA

DE COURTEN BEGAN THE MEETING BY THANKING WIRTH, ON THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEHALF OF ICRC, FOR USG INVOLVEMENT IN ASSISTING REFUGEES AND CONFLICT VICTIMS ALL OVER THE WORLD. DE COURTEN THEN EXPRESSED ICRC'S SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER THE SITUATION IN RWANDA, WHERE HE SAID IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT ICRC HAS EVER WITNESSED MASS KILLINGS IN SUCH A HORRIFIC MANNER. DE COURTEN COMPARED THE KILLINGS TO THE GENOCIDE IN CAMBODIA, WHICH OCCURED WITHOUT THE SAME PUBLICITY AND ATTENTION OF THE MEDIA AND OUTSIDE WITNESSES. DE COURTEN FIRMLY STRESSED THAT UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES SHOULD BE BROUGHT IN, NOT TO PROTECT THE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS OR RELIEF CONVOYS, BUT TO PROTECT THE CIVILIAN POPULATION WHO ARE BEING KILLED. ICRC HAS NOT BEEN PREVENTED FROM DELIVERING RELIEF SUPPLIES.

WIRTH COMMENDED ICRC NOT ONLY FOR ITS STAYING PRESENCE IN RWANDA BUT IN OTHER AREAS AROUND THE WORLD WHERE THE SITUATION WAS BOTH DANGEROUS AND LIFE-THREATENING. WIRTH ASKED DE COURTEN FOR ICRC'S FUTURE ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN RWANDA. DE COURTEN RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT THE KILLINGS WERE BEING CARRIED OUT UNDER THE COMMAND OF WELL-KNOWN HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND WOULD CONTINUE UNLESS MILITARY ACTION WAS TAKEN. ROSENBLATT, REFERRING TO A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN GENEVA NEXT WEEK, ASKED WHETHER OR NOT ICRC BELIEVED IT

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WOULD BE SENSIBLE TO CREATE A WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL IN ORDER TO PROSECUTE THE KILLERS IN RWANDA. ROSENBLATT ALSO ASKED IF ICRC WOULD VOLUNTEER TO BE WITNESSES IF SUCH A TRIBUNAL WAS CREATED. DE COURTEN, ALTHOUGH SYMPATHETIC TO THE NEED TO PROSECUTE THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KILLINGS, TOLD ROSENBLATT THAT IF IT WAS KNOWN THAT ICRC WAS WILLING TO TESTIFY IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS,

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THEY WOULD LOSE THEIR REPUTATION FOR BEING NEUTRAL AND LOSE THEIR ABILITY TO OPERATE AROUND THE WORLD. DE COURTEN ADDED THAT THERE WERE OTHERS WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO TESTIFY.

4. BOSNIA

WIRTH ASKED DE COURTEN FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE BOSNIAN SITUATION. ALTHOUGH DE COURTEN WAS PLEASED WITH THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS SEEN IN THE RECENT NEGOTIATIONS, HE SAID THAT ICRC REPORTS FROM THE FIELD INDICATED LESS OPTIMISM FOR THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. DE COURTEN EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT THERE WAS STILL ENOUGH HATRED AND DISTRUST FOR CONTINUING HOSTILITIES. DE COURTEN ALSO SAID THAT IN CENTRAL BOSNIA THE ETHNIC BALANCE WAS VERY SENSITIVE AMONG THE CROATS AND BOSNIAN MUSLIMS DESPITE THE NEGOTIATIONS. PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE, DE COURTEN REFERRED TO HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE REGION WHERE HE HAD ASKED RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF MOSTAR WHETHER THEY WERE READY TO LIVE TOGETHER AS A MIXED ETHNIC COMMUNITY. THE ANSWER HE RECEIVED WAS NEGATIVE.

ON A POSITIVE NOTE, DE COURTEN SAID THAT THE FOOD SITUATION IN BOSNIA-HERZGOVENIA WAS IMPROVING AND THAT ICRC WAS MAKING PLANS TO WITHDRAW FROM THE FOOD DISTRIBUTION ACTIVITY (ICRC WILL DECREASE ITS OPERATIONS THIS YEAR BY 40). DE COURTEN ADDED THAT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WERE IN THE PROCESS OF TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOOD PROGRAM AND THAT SOME COMMUNITIES IN MANY AREAS ARE BEGINNING TO PLANT AND CULTIVATE CROPS.

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5. DEMINING INITIATIVE

WIRTH AND DE COURTEN BRIEFLY DISCUSSED THE LANDMINE ISSUE AT THE END OF THE MEETING. DE COURTEN EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION OF SENATOR LEAHY'S WORK TO CONTROL LANDMINE USE AND US LEADERSHIP IN PROMOTING AN EXPORT MORATORIUM. HE TOLD WIRTH THAT ICRC STRONGLY SUPPORTS A LANDMINE BAN AND HAD STRESSED THAT POSITION IN THE PAPER PRESENTED AT LEAHY'S MAY 13 HEARING. WIRTH TOLD ICRC THAT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THEM TO LET THE WORLD KNOW THEIR VIEWS ON LANDMINES.

CHRISTOPHER

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